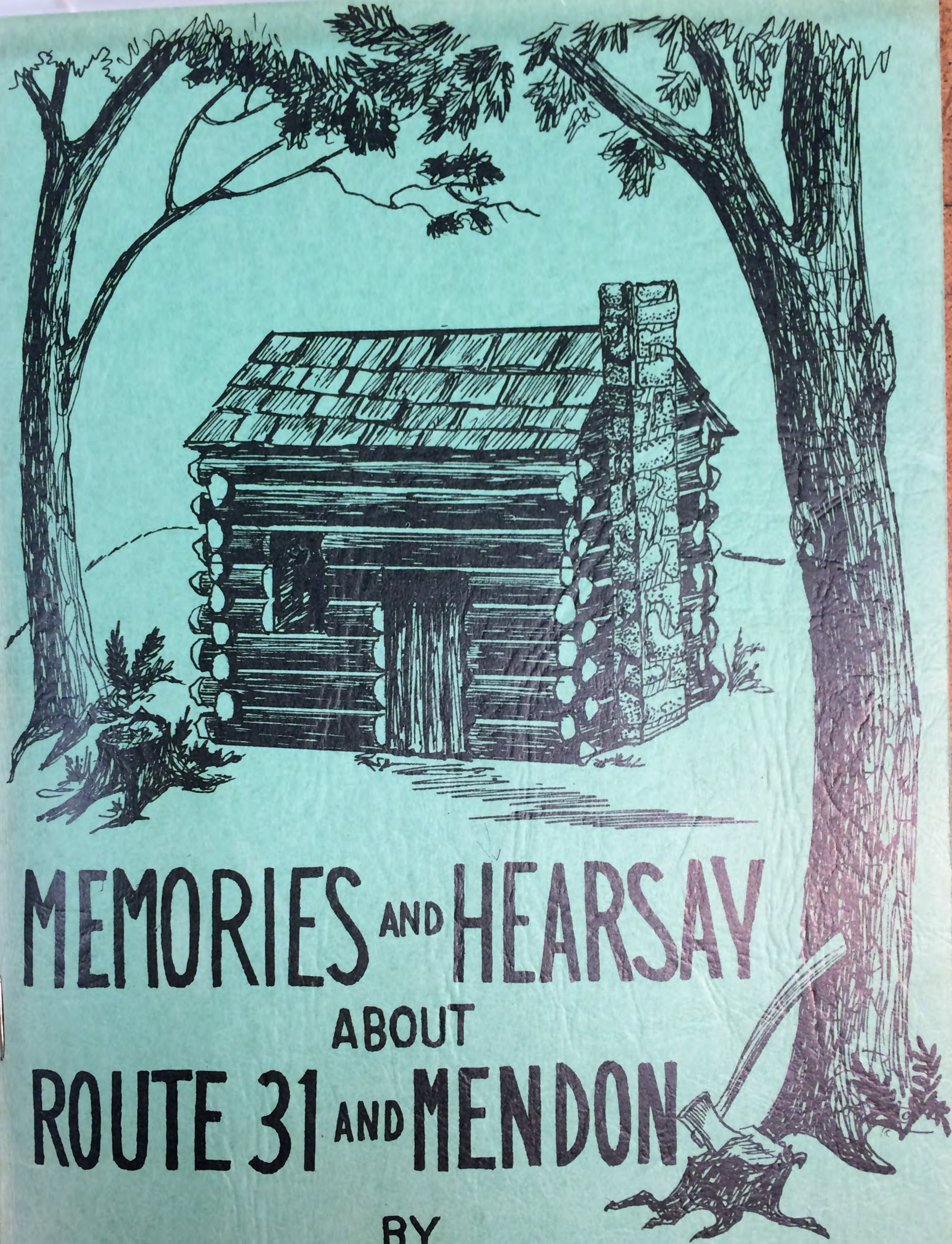




MEMORIES ^{AND} HEARSAY
ABOUT
ROUTE 31 ^{AND} MENDON
BY

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WANDA CLARK ~ ILLUSTRATOR

FOREWORD

In order that these historic and legendary events that have occurred in this region may be remembered, this booklet has been written.

I am grateful to those people who helped me clarify certain information about which I wasn't sure.

Should you have heard different versions of some of these stories, we shall not disagree about who is correct.

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Leahetta G. Albright

Died 12-89

Lovingly dedicated to the memory of my Grandmother, Clara Ruff, and her daughter, Mary, my mother, who inspired in me love for local history.

ROUTE 31

It is difficult to realize that Route 31 was at one time only a trail through the woods. It was used by wild animals going to and from the Ohio River to points in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Indians of the different tribes also used the trail, and as you have, doubtless, noticed the road has kept to the high land as much as possible. This gave both the animals and the Indians an opportunity to watch for enemies as they traveled. As the white man came over the mountains to the Ohio country, he, too, used the trail. The Indians called it Nemacolin's Path, while the white men spoke of it as The Glades Trail.

To my way of thinking, the portion of Route 31 which goes from Washington, Pennsylvania to Bedford, Pennsylvania has had a very colorful history in the townships of both South and East Huntingdon of Westmoreland County. It has been known by various names from time to time such as; The Glade Road, The Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway, The Plank Road, The Pike, and The Turnpike. Since 1965 the number has been changed to Route 136 from Washington, Pennsylvania to one mile east of West Newton, but from there to Bedford it is still known as Route 31.

The use of the different names came from a variety of reasons. The term The Glade Road was used because of the glade or swampy land in the Somerset County area. I remember of my Father's attending a banquet held in Monongahela City when the people of this region were agitating for a hard surfaced road. This group of citizens called themselves "The Glade Road Boosters". Father came home with a tiny American flag pinned on his coat lapel with the slogan, "The Glade Road Boosters" attached to it. I was ten years old as this time, and my next older sister, who was becoming very etiquette-minded, asked Father whether he had tipped the waitress. Father, looking very indignant, replied, "Of course I did." She, still pursuing the subject, asked, "How much did you leave?" He, very brusquely, replied, "A dime. That is what each of the men gave." Sister sighed with relief. How the standard for tipping has changed!

When Route 31 was to form a link in the proposed Pikes

Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway, the name was applied to this section. In fact that is how Ocean Park received its name. Strangers have asked how near the ocean is from here.

About the year 1850 the idea of using planks laid side by side was thought to be a good way to improve road conditions. However, these buckled from the elements, and after about seven years the idea was abandoned. When the planks were still in good condition, the "Young Dandies" on Sunday afternoons came from miles around to race their horses against each other. It is said that the sound of the hoofs could be heard for a mile away. Robert R. Painter told me that his father, the late John Painter, remembered riding on the plank road which ran from West Newton eastward.

Since the planks didn't prove successful, stones were broken and laid on top of the planks. This made quite a solid road in places. In fact, when the road was being readied and graded for concrete in 1926-27, pieces of the planks were found in a few instances. When these stones were placed on top of the planks, the road was raised, and where it was wide enough, a lower lane ran along beside it. The lower road was sandy and easier to ride on. It was called the summer road, and the stoned portion was known as the winter road. I remember of going to Ruffsdale with Mother driving our buggy horse, Tom, and using this summer road. There was a stretch between Mendon and Duesenberry's and again close to the Clyde Stoner farm. There were other stretches, but these two are the ones that I recall.

The road was called The Pike or Turnpike because it was at one time a toll road. A pike was used to close the lane of traffic until the fee was paid then the pike was turned aside until the vehicle passed. Toll was collected from West Newton to Laurel Mountain from 1850 to approximately 1920. The toll houses began to go out of business as soon as the county was able to take over portions of the road and pay for its upkeep. Toll houses close to West Newton went out of business first and kept working from there eastward. These houses were placed near where side roads joined 31. I remember seeing the old house at the top of West Newton hill near the Celapino Gas Station. Mother told me what it had been used for, but Father remembered paying toll there when he was going with Grandmother Albright to West Newton. They had

come from the Madison road. Another toll house was in the Null Hollow where the Mt. Pleasant-Pittsburgh Pike joins 31. The third, as I remember, was at the top of Ruffsdale where the Shannon house stood (now the Tom Aitken home.) Those are the only ones I know of between West Newton and Ruffsdale.

In August of 1915 my Dad bought his first car, a Maxwell. I know we didn't take many rides that fall as the roads would not permit car travel except in the summer months. The following summer we went for a ride to Laurelville. Here was the nearest toll house in use. It was not a turnpike but a pike with a heavy rock on the heavy end and a rope on the small. It was raised into the air to open the road. When Dad explained that we wanted only to go through and return to say we had been through a toll gate, the man charged us just one fee. This toll gate was placed here because Route 982 joined 31 near by.

Route 31 was used more or less as a trail about the time of the Whiskey Rebellion in Western Pennsylvania. The newly cleared land produced abundantly, and grain was grown on almost every farm. Unfortunately, the farmers had no market for their grain closer than Philadelphia, and the trail was such that it was impossible to carry the grain by wagon. Hence, the farmers did the most logical thing under the circumstances; they set up stills and made whiskey. The making of whiskey carried no stigma in that day. It was put in jugs and loaded on pack animals, and the long journey by way of Bedford to Philadelphia began. On the return trip supplies that were needed in this part of the country were brought.

Since the Federal Government was new and in need of money, it decided in 1792 to impose a tax on the whiskey that was being sold. The people in this region felt that this was unfair, and that the Federal Government could not do so. They flatly refused to pay it. The nearest tax collector in this region, according to the late J. A. Suter, stayed at the Philip Reagan home in Reagentown. The citizens were so incensed at Mr. Reagan for harboring a "Revenoor" that they burned his home. The government built Reagan another home at Federal expense. This was made of brick and for many years was the only brick home in Reagentown; it is no longer standing. As time went on, conditions grew worse instead of better.

Finally the more prominent citizens of Westmoreland County asked for Federal Government protection. As a result President Washington in 1794 sent the standing army of 15,000 men from New Jersey to put down the revolvers. Grandmother Ruff told us the story of what four brothers in East Huntingdon Township did when word was received that the army was coming near. Three of the brothers lived on adjoining farms: the Clyde Stoner farm (now the Lyman Stoner farm), the John Reynolds farm (now the Bob Bair farm), and the Bert Null farm (now Green Acres). The fourth brother lived near Reagantown, possibly the Homer Buttermore farm. The brother on the Stoner farm had a very loud and powerful voice. He called to the brothers on the adjoining farms that trouble was coming; then, the son that was the fastest runner was sent on a path through the woods to warn the fourth brother. When the army arrived, there wasn't a still to be found anywhere. They were all well hidden in the woods.

The standing army was kept in this vicinity for about three months, and the local citizens realized that the Federal Government did have the power to levy taxes, so they paid them. While here, the army camped wherever possible.

About this time a Mr. Robb owned a farm where West Newton now stands; however, there is some dispute about the exact date of ownership. Nevertheless, either the army or the revolvers tore down Mr. Robb's rail fences for fire wood. This so angered him that he decided to quit farming and sold his land off in lots. The village was known as Robbstown. Since Mr. Robb had come from Newton, New Jersey, he wished the community to be known as West Newton, but it was still known as Robbstown until 1835 when it became officially known as West Newton.

Previous to the Whiskey Rebellion anyone traveling the Glades Trail had to ford or ferry the Youghiogeny River. About 1775 there were two ferries across the river, one on the Rostraver side known as Simeral's Ferry, and the other as Budd's Ferry. The location was known as Simeral's Ferry, probably because Simeral also owned a tavern.

Robbstown grew slowly even though people did own lots. About 1800 the village was said to consist of two taverns, and less than a dozen houses. Then business began to pickup as early craftsmen began settling there and plying their trades.

By 1820 a period of progress had begun and many of the great Conestoga wagons going west from Philadelphia and other eastern centers were using the Glades Trail. It was decided that a more satisfactory method for crossing the river must be found.

Finally the Robbstown Bridge Company was incorporated in 1831, and in November 1833 the first horse crossed the bridge. This bridge was, of course, a toll bridge, and the rates ran from 1¢ for each head of sheep or a hog to 18¼¢ for a wagon drawn by two yoke of oxen. Not more than ten head of heavy animals were allowed on the bridge at one time. A fine of \$10 to \$20 was charged for smoking or loitering on the bridge. The bridge was a covered wooden structure with the sidewalk separated from the roadway. No toll was collected from persons going to church, to school, or to funerals. In 1890 the county purchased the bridge and made it toll free.

Sometime during the era toll was being collected for use of the bridge, Grandmother Ruff's Aunt Betsy Bryan Mellander (Mellinger), widow of John Mellinger, was employed as toll collector. Her house stood where Angelo's Restaurant now stands, and was a two story one room wide building with accommodations for three or four families. I remember of seeing the house, but Aunt Betsy had passed away shortly after the turn of the century. She was a small woman with a lame hip. Grandmother said that she became lame because she had sat on the cold stones at the spring house after a long walk from a neighbor's home on a hot summer day. She was the mother of two children: Elizabeth, a seamstress, and Lafayette. Lafayette was able to work only at odd jobs as he had had scarlet fever in his youth and was somewhat eccentric. In the spring of 1899 after her teaching term was finished, Mother went to live with Aunt Betsy and learn dress making from Cousin Elizabeth. Mother often told us the story that Aunt Betsy had laughingly told her about scaring the robbers who had come to steal the toll money one night.

Aunt heard several men trying to get in the door, as she slept downstairs. She went to the stairway and called, "John, come down. Someone is trying to get in." Then she tiptoed upstairs, put on a pair of men's heavy boots and came clomping down. Again she called a man's name, and carrying the boots went up stairs and clomped down. After clomping down

four times, the noises ceased, and the would be robbers left, hurriedly. Aunt, evidently, was a very shrewd business woman, or else she was well paid for toll collecting. In addition to the home she owned on Water Street, she owned and rented several others in town. When the Church of God was built, she donated in 1881 the four roomed parsonage which she had built at the cost of \$1,200.

As the bridge crossing the Youghiogheny River made it easier for early settlers to go farther west, more land was taken up and cleared. The Glades Trail became a very important route east for the farmers along the way to collect their marketable cattle, sheep, pigs, and even turkeys and make drives to the markets as far east as Philadelphia. It also helped the artisans of the east to send their much needed wares by Conestoga wagons west to the Pittsburgh region. For instance my great, great, grandfather, Judge Jacob Painter, bought in Pittsburgh for his daughter Susan's wedding gift one of the first three oil lamps brought west of the Appalachian Mountains. This was about 1830. Mother inherited the lamp.

As the more enterprising and affluent citizens along the trail realized that it was becoming a very popular transportation route, and that the travelers would need food and lodging, they began to build large homes. Some of these were to serve as drove stands for the cattle drivers and Conestoga wagon drivers while those built at a later date were used as stagecoach stops or inns. These latter were much more elaborate in construction and, I imagine, more expensive than the former.

The present Cyrus Markle home and The Willow Tree Farm were both used for stagecoach stops. The house at The Willow Tree Farm was built in the year 1853 and had some fourteen rooms, one of which was the bar room. It was run by Judge Painter's son, Christopher, and is still owned by the Painters.

The stone house below Ocean Park formerly owned by Clement and Lewis Smith and now owned by Matthew Caldwell was built in 1812 by the Robertsons. It seems by its construction that it served both as a drove stand and a coach stop. The fields near the barn were divided into small lots and each drover had his own space. The house was built in such a manner that the family had privacy. The four rooms toward Mendon, two up and two down could be entered from only one

outside back door, a winding staircase was used to reach the second floor. The front door entered on a central hall which went through to the back porch. From this hall ascended an open staircase. On the left downstairs was a combined kitchen and dining-room with a door opening onto the back porch, directly over these was the ball room and bar. On the right side of the hall were two rooms, possibly a parlor and a bedroom for the ladies. Above these were two bed rooms for the men. When the beds held as many as possible, others slept on the floor.

The Frank Sherbondy home, presently owned and occupied by the Charles Smiths in Mendon, was built prior to 1844; it, too, was a drove stand, and cattle grazed at night where the Hughes Saw Mill and Emerson Williams' stable stand. The John Nagy homestead, now occupied by Browns, was owned by the Davises. Still another was McKeon's Old Stand at the top of Ruffsdale hill, later owned by Harry and Lou Ruff. According to Mr. Thomas Martin, the drivers preferred stands that would give them a down hill start in the morning until the horses were limbered up. The horses were tied around the wagons at night and fed from the wagon beds.

The wealthier settlers bought large tracts of land from the government. One of these was a Mr. Fulton who built the Harrison Albright home. At that time it wasn't certain where the road would go. When the rain and snow made the trail too mucky to be used, it would be moved a short distance one way or the other. Mr. Fulton, thinking it would come past his home, built a house large enough for a drove stand. It has twelve finished rooms counting the three in the attic (probably made for the maids). And at the back one can see where a dining room and kitchen section was once attached.

Although Mr. Fulton didn't realize anything on his home as a drove stand, he was able to sell the northern 350 acres of his property to William Deusenberry for \$17,000. This Mr. Deusenberry was the grandfather of the present older generation of Deusenberrys and a Lieutenant in the Civil War. This said tract of land included the land north of the pike from the Nagy homestead, west on Route 31 to Mendon Alley, down the alley to the Clark property, over Kildiggen to the Rosantz property, across the Waltz's Mill road, to the Stull property. On the south side of the pike, it included the field back of the

Bert Deussenberry's house, where Mendon Elementary School stands, and the wooded area between Glenn Deussenberry's home and Elmer Williams' home.

Droves of livestock were taken along Route 31 for many years. Grandmother Ruff lived in East Huntingdon Township, where John Sossa now lives, and went to school in Ruffsdale. The building stood on the left side of 31 going east, and west of Route 119 going north. She said that often, when they would be coming up Ruffsdale hill home from school, they would hear the bellows of the half wild cattle and scramble up the high bank, climb over the fence, and run for their lives. Riders were sent ahead of the herds so the animals didn't run down the side trails. Pigs, sheep, and turkeys were also driven but weren't as dangerous. This would have been in the late 1850's as Grandmother was born in 1847.

Route 31 also held frightening occurrences during the Civil War. Grandmother said that one day a group of cavalrymen were seen coming down Tarr's hill. The teacher, thinking that they were the Rebels, dismissed the school and told the children to flee for their lives. As the soldiers drew closer, they could recognize the blue uniforms of the Union. The pupils lined up against the fence and asked the soldiers who they were and where they were going. The soldiers said that they had been separated from their division in the Battle of the Wilderness and were going to Wheeling, West Virginia to rejoin. The children then sang, "Rally Round The Flag Boys." The soldiers were very pleased.

When Grandmother was thirteen, school teachers became scarce because of war conditions, so she took the county teacher's test and taught school for a year. Since her father needed her on the farm, that is the only year she taught. Sister Grace has Grandmother's teaching certificate as a keepsake. However, Grandmother was permitted to attend Select School in the summer. As General Lee marched north in 1863, fear spread over this area. Grandmother said that when she would be sitting up at night preparing her lessons for the next day, and the dogs began to bark, she would put out the light, and race up the steps to bed. She was sure it was Lee and his men coming to kill them all. During the three days of fighting at Gettysburg, she said that the people could sense something terrible was going on, but there was no way of knowing where. How-

ever, if you put your ear to the ground, you could feel the reverberations of the cannons.

It was during this battle that Grandfather Ruff's brother, Israel, father of the Israel Ruff (Abie) many of you remember, had a portion of his skull torn away exposing the brain. A silver plate was used to cover the opening and he lived to be eighty-five years of age. I talked with him when he was eighty-two, and his mind was keen, but his sight was gone from the pressure of the plate.

After the Civil War the cattle drives eastward diminished. The railroads had taken over the transportation of animals. The stockyards for this area were centered in Pittsburgh, so naturally all saleable livestock was driven there. Mr Martin said that the John Taylor farm (now owned by the Stecks) on the Pittsburgh Pike was a drove stand for those going to Pittsburgh. Animals from the Ruffsdale area were driven west on Route 31 to the Pittsburgh Pike, through Waltz's Mill, Madison, Herminie, and to Circleville (near Norwin Shopping Center); then, by Route 30 to Pittsburgh. The animals from the Mendon region were driven down the present dirt road which leaves Mendon between the Esso Station and the Tavern and follows Lick Run to Waltz's Mill and on to the said pike. Naturally by this time the trails were becoming roads, and the livestock could be gotten to market more readily.

Even though Route 31 was a dirt road that didn't mean that fun, excitement, and accidents were lacking. In the winter we traveled in the farm sled when we went visiting. Straw was piled on the sled and covered with robes; we sat on the robes and snuggled in comforters pulled almost to our chins. If we needed to go to town in the winter and the road was clear, we used the buggy with the back flap and side curtains securely fastened. We always used a lap robe, and if the weather were exceptionally cold, we lit the lantern and put it under the robe to keep our feet warm. Sometimes we heated bricks in the oven and put these at our feet.

In the summer time the wagon box, which was used for hauling coal and grain, was removed and replaced by the hay ladder. This was partially filled with sweet smelling hay, and we were off to a picnic. I remember the Charles McCune Sr. family going to the Harvest Home picnic held in McClain's Grove in Rostraver Township near the Cedarbrook Golf Course

in their wagon. They took friends and neighbors until the wagon was full. They seemed to have a much jollier time than we who went by cars and drove in fear of a flat tire. Many others went by wagons. The wagons were parked in the shade of the beautiful oak grove, and the horses were unhitched and tied so that they could feed on the hay. That picnic was looked forward to from year to year.

When the Grange Picnic was held in the Bryan Woods where John Sossa now owns, I remember of our family going by hay wagon. I was only three years old at the time, and the only ones in addition to our family that I remember going along were Granny Littlehales and her two grandsons. The boys stood holding to the back upright of the wagon. I thought that they were very brave boys as this was a dangerous way to ride unless you were big. I'm sure there were others from Mendon on the wagon with us. Probably France, Lizzie, and Guffey Reynolds were there, too, as France worked for us.

France had a joke on me for many years. He worked for us when I was about fifteen months old. One rainy day he and Dad were sitting on the porch waiting out the shower. I was very fond of "Sansie" as I called him, and he made over me. This particular day I toddled over to him, leaned over his lap, and bit his knee until he holloed. Evidently I was cutting a tooth, and it was hurting. When I grew up and attended a picnic or a party, "Sansie" always managed to ask in front of the young men my age, "Leahetta, do you remember the time you bit me on the knee?" This always embarrassed me terribly, and for years I kept my distance from him at social functions.

One Saturday when I was nine years old, Mother, Brother, and I were driving to Wyano Company Store for "store bought bread" — a treat in those days. Adam Pitcus, a lad of nineteen, worked for us that summer. His parents were living, but he always called my parents "Pop" and "Mom". This particular Saturday he had hitched the driving horse, Tom, to the buggy. However, he didn't fasten the holding back straps. As we started down the hill back of where I now live, the buggy began bumping against the horse. The farther we went the more it bumped. Finally Tom began to gallop down the hill. Mother knew that this ride might prove to be disastrous, so she drove the horse into the bank below the Hughes homes.

The buggy upset, and I remember crawling out through the back curtain flap. We were not hurt, but Adam, who had been hoeing corn in the field where my house now stands, came running and calling, "Mom"! "Mom! Are you hurt?" Just then Mrs. Edgar Pore came along driving her horse, Mabel, and said that she would get our bread. Adam unhitched the horse, righted the buggy, rehitched him to the buggy, and we got in while he lead the horse home. The horse was too unnerved to be driven. The bread was all sold. We ate home made bread and were very thankful to be able to eat.

Drag racing was popular in the horse and buggy days, too. Several rigs of young people from the Herminie area went for an outing east on Route 31. It was dark by the time they were on the way home. As they were coming west past the Davis home (now the Nagy homestead), the road being smooth, the one vehicle attempted to pass the other. Not knowing about the summer and winter roads near the Bert Deussenberry homestead, the passing rig ran over the edge and fell onto the summer road. One of the occupants was hurt and was carried into the Deussenberry home. The doctor was sent for, and the patient spent the night at Deussenberry's but was able to go home the following day.

I really enjoyed the horse and buggy days as I imagine quite a number of you who read this did. I believe that I went riding with Mother more than the other children in our family did for several reasons: I was the youngest for four years; I was sickly; and it seems as though I could turn on the tears and accompany them with appropriate noises faster than anyone can imagine. However, Mother didn't put up with the latter too long; she gave me a reason for tears several times; and that settled the issue. On my rides with Mother, she would talk to me as to an adult. I knew the names of every family between Ruffsdale and West Newton, those related to us, and the relationships of others. As we rode along, houses were few and far apart, and the women were lonely. When they saw a rig coming, they would come outside on some pretext. Since Mother had lived in this area practically all her life, they knew her and she knew them. The horse would be stopped, and the women would have a good talk while the horse had a rest. The breakers on the hills were placed there to prevent washing by diverting the water to the water tables; they also were a boon to tired horses. When the front wheels rolled into the de-

pression, this acted as a brake, and the horse could rest.

Wherever water flowed to the road from a spring or a spring house, a watering trough was placed by the road so that the horses could have a nice cool drink on a warm day. I remember of one at the Bert Null (Green Acres) farm, another at the Cyrus Markle farm, and at the Bert Deussenberry farm one could pull entirely off the road, water the animals, and rest them a while.

Buggy riding gave one such a nice view of the landscape, and was also educational. I knew the names of the different kinds of cattle, trees, birds, crops, and wild flowers when I was quite young. Yes, the child of today who goes whizzing along in a car is really missing quite a bit in many ways.

Old 31 has many memories for us. How can we forget the itinerant salesmen — "Charlie the Peddler" with his horse drawn wagon and all the wonderful merchandise that made going back to school with new clothes possible; the peddler with the double suit case on his back which unfolded to display towels, sheets, pillowcases, and other necessities; the little old man with the market basket containing needles, pins, and notions; and, if poor old Mr. Holderbaum with his flowing white beard wouldn't have walked here from Irwin with his almanacs, we certainly couldn't have planted our gardens. Everyone knew seeds had to be planted in the "right signs" in order to yield a good crop. And did you ever take any of Mr. Holderbaum's herb medicine, a "Little Indian Pill" perhaps? If you missed that, you were indeed fortunate. And, oh yes, let us not forget the ice cream man with his horse drawn, umbrella covered wagon selling 6¢ cones on a hot summer's day. And to really top things off don't forget the grumbling coffee tramp, and the gypsies that came by in the summer sending chills up our backs for fear we might be stolen.

Do you remember sledding on the pike in the winter? The bolder ones went to the top of the hill with a bob sled and ended beyond the present tavern; and the more timid started at the school house and ended at the present Esso Station. One evening after school Alvia (Pete) Layman and Lloyd (Fat) Clegg were riding down the road and ran head on into a telephone pole. Alvia was knocked out, and, poor Lloyd, thought that Alvia was dead. He didn't run for home, but instead, put Alvia on the sled and took him to Mrs. Layman. Standing there

crying he said, "I didn't mean to kill him." It makes one feel sad to remember that Lloyd was laid to rest when he was only eighteen, but happy to report that Alvia is a proud grandfather. How ironic life is!

And I wonder how many of you recall when Mr. Layman and Mr. Ruoff moved the black smith and wagon maker shops from beyond the oak tree at the school house down the pike to the present location of Elmer Williams' garage? It was an all day job, but traffic was light and the road was wide.

While the road was still dirt, it was a problem to keep it in good traveling condition. The citizens in South Huntingdon Township were permitted to work out their road tax by spending a certain number of days in the spring filling and smoothing the chuck holes made during the winter. I remember of going to West Newton one day with Mother and Brother to see Dr. Sutton. We had the pink eye. On Fort Robertson hill we passed Dad who had the drag and the work horses, John and Dick, smoothing down ruts. He came to the buggy to see how we were. He was a very kind and thoughtful father. I always liked to ride on Fort Robertson hill because Smith's had a tenant house there where the man who worked their coal pit lived, and I liked to watch his children playing. On the Gaut side of the road were three pit mouths. Two had fallen in but the third was being worked by Mr. William Bair Sr., and a donkey was used to pull the wagon of coal to the surface so that the surrounding farmers could get their coal supply in their farm wagons.

There is a joke on me about that donkey. It took years to live it down. One day my brother and I were going to the peach orchard which lay on the hill above the house. That orchard always did look a mite spooky to me, so I was going hesitatingly in the lead. Suddenly I heard a terrible sound. I turned and made for the house, again in the lead but not hesitatingly. I was yelling at the top of my voice, "There's a lion in the peach orchard. I heard it." It was only the poor lonesome donkey braying. He was pastured in the field above Bair's house and across the road from our peach orchard. I had never heard the bray of a donkey and was so frightened that I forgot I had a little brother or else I figured lions didn't eat little boys.

About 1920 with World War I past, business began to pick up in this area. No longer did Dad and Mr. Elroy Nicholls have

to take turns, week about, hauling cans of milk in a one horse spring wagon through rain, sleet, or snow to the P. and L. E. Railroad station in Smithton by 6 A. M. from where it was shipped to McKeesport. A creamery was built in Tarrs, and a truck ran along Route 31 collecting cans of milk to haul to the creamery. Mr. Will Bair and Dad built a loading platform north of the oak tree at the school ground line, and put their cans on it. Lucien (Pete) Suter of Ruffsdale was the truck driver. He was tall, blonde, and handsome and caused quite a stir among the young ladies of the vicinity.

Another boon came to the community when the Blanchard Coal Company bought the Clement and Lewis Smith farm (now Matt Caldwell's home) and began coal stripping operations. It was the first time anything of the kind had been done in this part of the country. The strip mining operation made a great change in the financial condition in these parts. Many of the young men left the farms and went to work at Blanchard for big money. A house was built in the Smith's orchard for the superintendent (now the Mason home); three houses were built where the Truxal Hughes family and the William Bibby family live, the third was later sold and moved to South Greensburg. Two barrack-like houses were built below the stone house, these were later torn down, and a rooming house was built across from Gaut's gate. This latter was divided and moved onto two separate foundations when it was no longer needed as a rooming house. The Delbert Cook and John Sever families now occupy the houses. After coal operations had begun, I remember of all the girls from Mendon, young and old, going one Sunday afternoon on a walk to see this steam shovel that looked and sounded like some pre-historic animal. Of course no work was done on Sunday so we were able to go close to it. In fact I sat on the operator's seat and was very thrilled being but ten years old at the time. The operator was Edwin Deussenberry, and both he and his brother Leland were there, probably guarding it. After we had looked and exclaimed, we went down into the field near where Jim's Cabinet and Supply Shop now stands and took camera pictures as we were wearing our Sunday clothes for the occasion. Then we walked home. That constituted a big day in our time. When the coal was stripped on the Gaut farm, school was in session and Sister Grace was teaching at Fort Robertson. The workers had to use dynamite; on occasion a man would be sent to notify

the principal, and all the children and teachers would go to the far end of the play ground until the blast was over. When they went back, they watched the ceiling closely to avoid being hit by bits of falling plaster.

While the coal was being stripped on both the farms, the coal companies at Wyano, Yukon, and Peanut were also working full time. Trucks, cars, and wagons were all being used. You can well imagine how churned-up and muddy the Pike became during rainy weather, and how the ruts froze and stayed all winter. One was obliged to carry a mattock in the car to dig himself out of the ruts.

One day a car was coming up Fort Robertson hill toward Mendon, and there in a rut stood a tire from a Model T Ford car. The poor driver was working so hard to get through the mud that he had actually pulled the tire off the rim without knowing it. The road was so rough that he had gone on home driving on three tires and one rim. It is no wonder that when the Pike was cemented in 1926-27, that we people were willing to put up with much inconvenience to get to town when necessary such as driving through neighbor's fields or going on practically impassable back roads.

After the Pike was cemented, traffic was much heavier and buggy riding was dangerous. It was the "Roaring 20's" and money flowed like water. Then came the Depression of the 1930's and traffic was almost at a standstill. We could once more walk the road in safety. Cars were so scarce that we learned to roller skate on the cement road in Mendon. Then traffic began to flow in volume when World War II was declared. The Pennsylvania Turnpike had been put through and Route 31 was the greater portion of the connecting link between Washington and the New Stanton Interchange. The railroads were busy transporting soldiers and ammunition, and that is when the tractor-trailer truck came into its own. Food stuffs of all kinds were being hauled from the West to the eastern cities. Cattle, sheep, and pigs were not driven, they were hauled in slatted trucks.

It is said that history repeats itself. In this instance it did even though it was approximately one hundred years later. The Robertson Inn on the old Smith farm was used as a farm house; the road relocated through the orchard made it possible to locate Ocean Park on Route 31 several hundred yards from the

old inn. The original Ocean Park building erected by Mr. William Smitley about 1928 (now run by the Darrell Hepler family as a restaurant) became a very welcome sight to the tired and hungry truckers, and the animal trucks although not unloaded stood in the shade of the trees so that the animals rested, too. Thus the same farm was used again for the comfort of travelers. The two laned road was overloaded with traffic, but with the completion of Route 70 in the early 1960's, it has been greatly relieved.

When the road was used for heavy traffic, it was very difficult to go safely by car. One didn't think of walking, however, Mother Nature can over rule the strongest machinery when she decides to. In the winter of 1945 it was safe to sled ride on Old 31 for several weeks. We had terrific snow storms in the month of December, and it was impossible to keep the roads open, even for the school buses. The Mendon youngsters were sledding past our house. Mrs. Raymond Mason Sr. came to our house for a short visit, and she and Grace began talking about sled riding in the good old days. Mrs. Mason had lived near West Newton as a girl, and she said that she had ridden down the hill from the top. The young people knew the train schedule, and they knew when it was safe to ride. Grace and she went outside still discussing sledding. Presently, I heard hilarious laughter from the youngsters outside. Looking out to see what was happening, I saw Grace lying prone on a borrowed sled, Mrs. Mason making it two deep. They were gliding merrily along on Route 31. They reported that the ride was as enjoyable as when they were younger.

Today on Route 70 it takes but a short time to drive from Washington to New Stanton and then on to Bedford. Again the railroad is taking a hand in cattle and other transportation. The tractor-trailers are being taken to central locations, and the trailers are loaded on flat cars "piggy back".

But for a really scenic ride nothing can take the place of Old 31 from Washington to Bedford. Perhaps one reason this road means so much to me, and it should to many of you who are reading this, is the fact that our forefathers used it in coming into Westmoreland County.

Yes, I am proud of my forefathers and the role they played in the settling of this part of Pennsylvania. It surely took stamina to forge into this land of wilderness some 200 years ago.

I often ask myself, would they be proud of me? Have I done the best with the ability that has been given to me?

MENDON

The questions as to when and why Mendon was built have never been satisfactorily answered. We do feel we have strong evidence in the following statements leading us to believe that Mendon's origin was some time in the late 1700's.

We know that Hannastown was the seat of Westmoreland County Government from 1773-1782, when it was burned by the Indians. The settlers were so incensed by the atrocities committed at Hannastown that they flocked in from the surrounding countryside to help. Of course the Indians were gone by the time help arrived.

Grandmother told me that my great, great, great, grandfather, Anthony Ruff I, who was eighty years old at the time, took the boys (meaning his sons) and walked a good twenty miles to aid the cause. The walk doesn't seem to have harmed him as he lived to be one hundred, six years of age. This old ancestor had another reason for resentment against the Indians. When he was bringing his family from Lancaster County to Westmoreland County sometime in the 1750's, the family stopped at Fort Loudon. The oldest girl was sent to a nearby cabin for potatoes. She was bringing them back in her apron when Indians took after her. Grandmother said that she would have made the fort in safety had she dropped the potatoes. As it was, the Indians captured her and took her north. After forty years of negotiating through the French, they brought her home. By this time she had become so accustomed to the Indian ways that she could not adjust to her home life and lived in the yard in a wigwam.

At the time Hannastown was burned, the county was comprised of all of South Western Pennsylvania. Even the people in Pittsburgh went to Hannastown on legal business. The people of Rostraver also had to go there. The most direct trail for them to follow would be to ford the Youghiogheny River at what later was Smithton, follow the Joe Williams road (where Ralph Newlin lived), past the Nicholls homestead to Mendon. Here they would follow the trail past Kildiggen, along Lick Run, past Jim Baker's home, the Thomas Martin

home, and then ford the Sewickley Creek near the William Dennick home. They would then follow on the Sewickley side below the Atomic Plant (which had been the George Waltz farm) and on which stood Stokely's or Miller's Blockhouse for protection. Continuing along Thickety Run they would pass Seanor's church, where the oldest grave is dated in the 1790's and where a log church stood which was used as a school during the week, on to Centerville, past the Errett Burial Ground dating back to the 1780's, then by Middletown, to the Harrold Settlement which dates back to 1769 and which had nearby Fort Allen for protection, and from there to Hannastown.

What has all this to do with Mendon? The Glades Trail went through Mendon, and where two important trails crossed, a settlement generally developed. As to Mendon being built in the late 1700's, we feel that this must be accurate because it has had four free schools, and Mr. Jacob Pore, born in 1850 went to the first one. He also related that his grandfather told him that the one roomed log house that stood beside the Pore home (now the Marion Kelly home) was the first school in Mendon. Five pupils attended this school. This would have been known as a "Dame School", as any woman who could read and write could hold school in her own home for her own and neighboring children. Since this was referred to as a school, one supposes that the children came from several families. The William Bair home (now owned by Daniel Blasko) was another old house, first owned by John Boyd, another was the Alvia Smith home (now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Porucznik). The house across the road from the "Dame School" was very old. It was lived in by Squire McMichael, George Jacobs (a cobbler), Joseph Layman (a blacksmith), and the last family I remember there was the Hiles family. Alvia Smith bought the property and had the buildings torn down as they were in poor condition. Now Margart Porucznik grows lovely flowers on the site. On the George Albright property on the site where Joe Clegg built his garage stood another log house. The Kelleys lived in it before Mr. William Kelley (Dad) built the new home, the one the Albrights live in. I hardly remember the three houses that were torn down. The Drove Stand, presently owned by the Charles Smith family and previously the home of the Frank Sherbondy family, was built prior to 1844. These six buildings, we feel, were possibly the first ones in Mendon. Dr. Lewis Sutton I was Mendon's doctor before 1844 and

roomed and boarded at the Drove Stand. It is said that one of the girls who worked there always had his meal warm and ready regardless of the hour he returned from a case. He married her and built the house that Nicewongers later owned (now the late Edgar Pore home), about 1844.

Mendon for at least a century was the business center of the surrounding community. It had doctors—Sutton, Milligan, and Crise; squires—McMichael and S. O. Deussenberry; stores—Vance, C. C. Sherbondy, P. A. Sherbondy, Sumner Sherbondy, George Sherbondy, and Nicewonger; blacksmith shops—Grove and Layman; a wagon maker shop—Ruoff; shoe maker shops—Hoenshel and Jacobs; carpenters—Frank Sherbondy and Kelley; a Drove Stand, a post office, a polling place, a hall used for band practice, and sometimes Sunday School and Church; the "Green" in front of the Blasko home where itinerant traveling shows and photographers plied their trades, and a church built in 1898. The other artisans and scholars of Mendon worked in areas where their skills were needed.

People from the Pierce, the Barren Run, the Jacobs Creek, the Yukon, and the Glenwood regions (the latter settled about 1755) came to Mendon for supplies. Mr. Thomas Martin remembers when Kildiggen, the wooded ridge which goes from north of South Huntingdon High School to Waltz's Mill, was plowed and farmed. The foundations of some of the log homes can still be seen. Even I can remember of the ninety acres known as the Clark Place, where we pastured our cattle, being quite clear in spots. In the spring there were flowering shrubs around the partially decaying buildings, and in the autumn the apple orchards yielded bountifully. In the summer groups of people from Wyano would picnic there. In addition to Mr. Clark's land was The Swartz property, The McGuffey land, The Seigel Lot, The Riley Lot, and The Waltz property. There were other properties, but I don't recall them. These people dealt in Mendon.

Mr. Riley, who was an Irishman, has been given the credit for naming the ridge. It seems that when he came to Mendon for supplies that he would complain about his Kildiggen, the Irish word meaning stony ground.

There is about an acre of land on Round Top unclaimed and owned by the government. This came about through difficulty in running original claim lines as there was no survey-

ing, and first there, first served seemed to be the order of the times. The settlers would build wherever they found a good spring of water.

On the Clark Place one comes across elevations that look like the old-fashioned graves; beside them are depressions. Iron ore was found in pockets along the ridge; it was taken out by pick and shovel and the mounds of dirt were not replaced. More than eighty years ago my father's brother, John, who was in his early twenties walked from beyond Madison, dug iron ore all day, then walked home again in the evening. The iron ore was hauled by horses and wagons to Broadford. According to John C. Bloom of Scottdale, the iron ore was made into steel in the old type stone furnace. Since Broadford lies between Connellsville and Dawson, the steel could be shipped on the B. and O. Railroad. It is said that there could be more pockets of iron ore found in these hills, if need be, however, a more plentiful supply was discovered in Michigan.

Broadford must have been a flourishing town for many years as Grandmother told us that her Father, Samuel Bryan, would take his garden and orchard produce there to sell. She said that they would be on their way with horse and wagon as the birds were beginning to twitter in the morning.

Dr. Sutton I was a very learned man. Young men who wished to become doctors read medicine under his tutelage. This meant that they lived with him, accompanied him on his rounds, and had access to his medical library. The young men who studied under him were Dr. Crise, Dr. Lewis Sutton II, and several others unknown to me. According to Dr. Crise the examination at the end of the training period was an oral one. His was given one evening by several practicing doctors in conjunction with Dr. Sutton. They assembled in the doctor's office after supper and began asking and receiving answers to their questions. After being unable to give him a question that he couldn't answer, they declared him a doctor in the wee hours of the morning. Dr. Sutton I lived in the big house and doctored in his office (now the polling house in Mendon) some forty years. A small house in the backyard housed the groom who looked after his horses. On his retirement he sold his property to the John Nicewonger family, and Mr. Nicewonger used the office as a store building.

The Grove homestead was another old building. The

Charles Cook Sherbondy family came from a farm near Normalville and bought the house and store from a Mr. Vance, who owned it approximately one hundred years ago. C. C. Sherbondy was a brother of P. A., David and Sumner. According to mother, their father was a Methodist Minister. The C. C. Sherbondy store stood where the late Earl Sherbondy's garage now stands and was run by his wife (Aunt Jenny) as he was a cattle buyer. His wife was Sara Jane Smith from Smith-ton, a sister of Irwin Smith. When she was married, a box car load of furnishings was sent by her grandmother, who reared her, on the B. and O. Railroad to Connellsville to be taken to the farm. Because it was so lonely on the farm, they moved to Mendon.

The store building was a long narrow two story structure. In the downstairs were two rooms; the front room was the store, and the back room was a supply room. The second story was used for various purposes; such as, band practice (Mendon had a brass band and played at every gathering of importance within a ten mile radius. Every musician from Glenwood to Yukon belonged), a grange hall, and at times a Sunday School room. The post office was in Aunt Jenny's store, and the mail came by train to Ruffsdale then by horseback to Mendon, later it came by horse and buggy. When we had a Republican President, P.A. Sherbondy who was a Republican had the post office in his store. When the Democrats came back into power, across the road it would go to Aunt Jenny, a Democrat. About the turn of the century, Ruffsdale began an R. F. D. route. Mr. William Hout, the first mail carrier, took the mail to rural boxes. This was a boon to the country folk especially in snowy weather.

A boardwalk connected the red brick house to the store room. Then about eighty-three years ago. C. C. Sherbondy built the house where the late Earl Sherbondy lived and sold the other to Jacob Grove. Mother in the winter of 1900, was a milliner and made and sold her hats in Aunt Jenny's store. Mother admired her very much and was especially fond of her family of ten sons and three daughters who were Fanny (Mrs. John Martin), Henry, David, Charles, Bert, Lawrence, Joseph, Loretta (Mrs. Jim McCune), Maggie, Oliver, Orton, John, and Earl.

Aunt Jenny was a jolly patient woman who took life as

it came. She told mother of the woman customer, who had taken in an orphan niece to rear, pulling a trick on her. Every so often the woman came to shop and while there, the little girl would begin to cry. Aunt Jenny would ask what was wrong with the little girl. Then the woman would say, "Oh, I guess the Little Heifer wants a new dress." Aunt Jenny would measure off several yards of calico and give it to her. Aunt Jenny knew why the little girl had cried, she saw the woman pinching her; however, she never said anything to the woman.

Aunt Jenny's hired girl was Maggie Zimmerman who was from near Normalville. She helped rear the large family, as Aunt Jenny was widowed before the last child, Earl, was born.

P. A. Sherbondy built his store, which is now the home of Emerson Williams, after C. C. Sherbondy became store keeper. He had six children that I know of: David, Sumner, Frank, George, Lucy Hole, and Laura Meyers. Sumner took charge of the store and ran it when he was just fourteen years old. About seventy-five years ago, Sumner moved to the Charles McIntyre's farm and his brother, George, took charge and ran it until 1922 or 23. At that time the Joseph Layman family bought it and kept store for several years.

Mrs. Elma Sherbondy told me that she remembered walking to Mendon to the store with her mother when Sumner Sherbondy was in business. When she arrived, she had a miserable stomach ache and sat on a bench outside. The storekeeper asked Mrs. Morton what was wrong with the little girl, and when he learned, he brought her a peppermint stick. After eating it, she was able to go into the store and see all the wonders that the old-fashioned store held for a country child.

When I was small, George (G. M. Sherbondy) had the only store in Mendon. I was very happy when Mother sent me for some article. I would always wheedle several pennies from her for lozenges, because they lasted longer, and you got four or five for a cent.

In the center of the store stood a pot-bellied stove around which the men sat in the winter to warm themselves and spit tobacco juice into the box of shavings collected fresh daily from the nearby wagon-maker shop. They talked about politics or other topics of interest to them. That store had everything in it or so it seemed to me: thread, dress goods, shoes, tobacco,

pipes, round cheese, a cracker barrel, cookies, apothecary jars of lozenges and stick candy, nails, carbon oil, and even buggy whips.

These latter, I remember, hung from a ring attached to the ceiling. There is a little story about them which I consider clever. It seems that some of the young lads had been going into the store at noon while Mr. Sherbondy went for lunch and helping themselves to his wares. Having discovered the deception, one noon Mr. Sherbondy hid back of the door. Along came the boys and began to pilfer his wares. Mr. Sherbondy quickly closed the door, grabbed a whip, and used it well. This ended all pilfering trouble.

The only member of the David Sherbondy family that I knew was Mrs. Jacob Pore of Mendon. I remember her mother, Aunt Kate, sitting on Pore's porch, Aunt Kate lived to be ninety-two.

In the 1800's no packaged breakfast foods or breads were on the store shelves. Almost every farmer raised his own buck wheat and had it ground for cakes. The sweetening came from the juice of the sorghum he had grown, squeezed, and boiled down to a molasses. Several farmers were fortunate enough to have sugar maple trees, the Nicholls and Stahls. Corn was ground into meal and mush was used either with milk and sugar or fried with "head pudding", ponhaus was also fried. And of course some people preferred sausage and eggs. Woolen goods and linen were home produced products, too. Many farmers had their own flocks of sheep, sheared the sheep, made the wool into yarn, and knitted it into necessary winter articles of clothing. The newly cleared land was ideal for growing flax from which the linen material was woven and made into summer wear.

According to Mr. Martin, Waltz's Mill was on the Sewickley side of the creek; it was a bur stone and farmers brought their wheat to be ground into flour about one hundred years ago. Mr. Martin's father, John Martin, ground cattle feed in the mill some seventy-five years ago. When grinding was to be done, the spillway of the mill dam (which began about two hundred fifty feet above where Jim McCune's house stands) was closed and the water backed up almost to Hunker.

Mendon always provided a little excitement to be dis-

cussed during dull moments. About the time Squire McMichael was living in Mendon, the wealthy Colonel Israel Painter, who was reported to own fifty farms when he died, was almost robbed. Many of you remember how the dirt road curved at the top of Mendon hill. At that time the road was bordered by a woods of large oak and other trees. Colonel Painter owned the Salt Works in Painterville (New Stanton, near Hepler's Mill) — but lived at the Willow Tree Farm on Route 31. It was a well-known fact that he traveled between the two places on certain days and had money with him. He always drove a rig with two spirited horses and wore a stove pipe hat. This particular day as he was going up Mendon Hill, he noticed an old woman with a slight limp carrying a satchel. In those days it was customary to invite pedestrians to ride. So he stopped and asked her if she wished to ride. She got in the rig, and when she placed the satchel on her lap, she put her knees together as a man does. Immediately the Colonel became suspicious. As he started the team, he managed to knock off his hat with his whip. He asked the woman if she would please get his hat as his team was entirely too fractious for a woman to control. At once the woman got out for the hat leaving the satchel on the seat, so he whipped the team, and went around the curve at top speed. The woman, as he suspected, was a man and shot after him. The accomplices on hearing the shots, thought it was the Colonel shooting, fled. When the Colonel got home, he opened the satchel and found burglar's tools. No one seems to know who the would be robbers were; nevertheless, the plan was that the woman was to ride with Mr. Painter, and on the curve the accomplices would step from the woods and grab hold of the horses' bridles while she, holding a gun on him, relieved him of his money. I imagine this episode was good for a lot of tobacco juice spitting and conjecturing around the store stove for quite some time.

To the best of my knowledge, Mendon has had four free schools. The stone house owned by George Albright (where Ray Poole lived for years), the one in which I was born, the red brick where so many of us attended, and the present new building.

Mr. Jacob Pore, who was born in 1850 and lived to be one hundred one years of age, went to the stone building which had one room with an open fireplace on the northern side. When the big boys didn't want to attend school, they occas-

ionally stuffed the chimney with straw. This caused the room to fill with smoke, and school would be dismissed for the day. Mr. Pore did not live in Mendon at that time. His home was in the house owned by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Davis.

I was born in the frame school building. Colonel Painter owned the land beyond the red brick building. He had the frame building moved to the present location, another story added and rented it as a dwelling. The board bearing S. H. No. 10 can still be seen on the west side of the house. Dr. Crise said that the frame building still stood on the back of the school ground when he was young. The older boys played ball in it on rainy days.

The red brick school building (home of the Clement Layman family) was built ten feet longer than other schools in the township. Mother told us that the people of the community contributed money to have the building made larger, so that Sunday School could be held there. Grandfather Ruff was one of the Sunday School Superintendents.

We speak of how well-behaved children used to be. Well, we were good; but we were very, very human. I remember of visiting Mendon School before I was of school age. I wore my pretty red silk dress with an eton jacket. It was my "good" dress, given to me by my town cousin after she had outgrown it . . . Oh, no, nothing was wasted in our generation. The school seats were double, and I was sitting on the side next to Melvin Soles. He was some older, and like most little boys was looking for a little diversion to liven up the monotony of the day. He looked across the aisle and saw this scared looking little kid. At the first chance he had, he gave my jacket a tug. This caused me to look beseechingly at Sister for help, but she was busy and hadn't even noticed. I sat very still looking straight ahead of me. After a while, I gave him a little peek, and he was ready for me. He made a pig face at me, which everyone knows is done by pushing the nose up with the middle finger, and pulling the lower eye lids down with the fingers on either side. That did it! I sat on the other side of Sister. Well, I sat and sat, then the horrible thought struck me that perhaps keeping quiet so long my voice would be gone. So very cautiously I made a tiny mouse squeak . . . just testing. Sister gave me a stern look, so I sat still some more. After some time, I tried another little test. That time I got an elbow in the ribs.

Needless to say, I visited school no more, and I didn't mind because it had been a very harrassing experience for me.

Mother told us about how she almost was spanked for laughing when she went to school. It seems that they had a Pennsylvania Dutch teacher by the name of Mr. Courtney, a good teacher and evidently very well dressed for that day. He always wore a swallow tailed coat which was some what unusual in a country school. Someone in Mendon had butchered and Charles Sherbondy (Uncle Chas.) brought a nice long pig tail and a big safety pin to school. He put the pin through the pig tail and, waiting his chance, put the pin through the coat tail of the teacher. Mother saw this and began to laugh. The teacher whirled around and said, "What are you laughing about, Maury?" He couldn't say Mary. The others saw it by now and they began to laugh also. As he whirled, the coat tail stood out as did the pig tail. Mother couldn't answer for laughing, but some little first grader told him the trouble. He took the pig tail off and went up and down the aisles asking each child if he had done it. When he came to "Uncle Chas," he very truthfully replied, "I didn't see anybody doing it." Finally things settled down, and no one was spanked.

Then there was the best boy in school who always made 99% in behavior on his report card each month. The teachers would have liked to have given him 100%, but they felt that no one could be perfect all the time. Occasionally he would bring a heavy bolt from his father's tool shed, and when all was very still, let it fly across the room and hit the wainscoting with a terrible clang. He would glance up from his book with a very startled expression and look for the wicked person. He was never caught, and I'll not name him as I wouldn't want to disillusion his former teachers at this late date.

And, one more story, about two good little girls who sat in a back seat. They were studying very industriously back of Roddy an all concealing geography, or so it seemed. What were they doing? Eating cookies one had brought from her father's store. Whatever became of such naughty girls? Oh, thy became school teachers . . . very strict disciplinarians. And who were these naughty girls? Why, the former was Miss Grace Albright and the latter was Mrs. Alverda Sherbondy Chapman (Bird).

My elementary education was acquired in the red brick

school in Mendon. I am very grateful that I had the privilege of attending a one-room, all grade school. Associating with the older children gave the younger children an incentive for better behavior, and it taught the older ones compassion for younger children. I have many happy memories of those school days. However, it is with regret that I write these names in memory of those who have gone to their reward: a teacher, Mr. William Gressly and my school mates: Jane Sherbondy, Eula Sherbondy Tietze, Edgar Wilson Sherbondy, Hannabelle Sherbondy Wistran, John Sherbondy (brother of Violet S. Williams, Evelyn S. Landis, and Hildredge), William Rozantz, Harry Weaver, Lloyd Clegg, Nellie Clegg Cochran, Lloyd Baird, and Mary Ruoff Rhodes.

I started to school when I was seven years of age, and my joy knew no bounds. I had three new store bought dresses. And if you think that the third daughter in a family whose mother is a seamstress hasn't a hard time getting a new store bought dress, you just never lived in the thrifty era of my time.

My seat mate was Hazel Waltz Eichar who had beautiful long blonde braids, and I had only a short bob with bangs. How I admired her hair!

During my eight years in school, I had six different teachers. I can recall something pleasant about each year. My first teacher was Miss Laura Shannon who drove a horse and buck board from Ruffsdale. We were to have a "doings" at Mendon one Friday evening, and mother said that I might ask the teacher to our house for supper. Elizabeth Layman had asked her first, and I was almost in tears. However, for a young teacher of eighteen she certainly was diplomatic. She promised to come to my house after supper, visit, and then she, my sisters, and I would go to the "doings". I held back the tears, and went bravely home to wait; she came as she had promised.

When we heard the first airplane going over Mendon, she allowed us to go to the windows and look at it. When World War I ended, a tank was brought to Ruffsdale on display; she took all those permitted by their parents to Ruffsdale to see it. She drove, giving the smaller ones turns at riding, while the larger ones walked. On the way home we stopped at her house where her Mother gave each child two large squares of fudge she had made, chocolate and maple. That was a treat!

Then several fathers came in cars and brought us home. She was a young teacher without a degree, but she understood children.

Miss Louressie Sherbondy taught me the next two years. I remember going to school one day in my best pink dress and hat. It was very inappropriate as I now know, and which I'm sure she knew. Her words were, "Why, Leahetta, how pretty you look today!" Those words came from a kind heart . . . not all teaching is from book knowledge. I remember a very effective Health and Hygiene lesson she taught about the nasty habit of tobacco chewing. She had first hand information on the subject because she helped clean the saw dust box for the tobacco chewers in her father's store.

In those days Thanksgiving Day was not observed by a vacation. The Nicholls family was having a turkey dinner for relatives. Naturally Helen and Annabelle, who always carried lunch, wanted to go home for dinner. Miss Sherbondy allowed them to, and we were all in a dither for fear they might be late. An hour wasn't much time in which to walk a mile, eat, and return. However, the teacher put off ringing the bell until the last minute. When we saw them coming by Bair's barn, the bell was rung. By the time the last pupil on the grounds came in, the girls were there. Everybody was relieved.

Next came a young man teacher, the late William Gressly. Since he felt candy harmed the teeth, he gave us a nut hunt one day. He had bought pounds and pounds of nuts that do not grow in this climate, and hid them throughout the room at recess time. We had a delightful time hunting and eating them. During his school year we had literary society. He came to our house for supper one literary evening. I would like to be able to recall who my seat mate was the day Mr. Gressly was stirring the fire in the front stove, and the rickety old stove pipe let go from the ceiling. I was watching. As I saw the pipe start to fall, I pushed by poor seat mate into the aisle and fell on top of her. It is a good thing I did, a section fell just where I had been sitting.

Miss Leona Shannon was the next teacher. She had an understanding of children which is not always found in teachers. Christmas Day was observed as a holiday, and I went with Grandmother and an aunt to the Durstine home for a goose dinner. Several days after that I missed school. When

Mother told her I was ill, probably from eating too much goose, she smiled and said that she wasn't surprised because the day after the dinner, I sat scuffing my feet back and forth on the floor all day. She knew I wasn't trying to be naughty, so she said nothing.

When Miss Elizabeth Hoover taught us, she planned a Halloween Party for the community. The old, as well as the young, came masked. I remember the late Woodrow Bryan Sr. had blackened his brows, made a mustache and sideburns. He also used rouge and lipstick. We young ones were sure it was he one minute, then uncertain the next. I think that he enjoyed our perplexity more than anything. We all had a fine evening. At Christmas she treated us with candy in Holly covered boxes. We enjoyed the treat twice as much because of the pretty boxes.

My last grade school teacher was Mr. Harry Rhome, a jolly happy person. I remember his mental arithmetic classes and the singing of songs. Helen Sherbondy Nicholls played the organ well and was the accompanist.

I wonder how many of you remember the big girls carrying the drinking water from Pore's pump and all of us drinking from the same dipper; then germs became popular, and each brought his own cup, or glass. In winter, with teacher's permission, we went sledding in Mr. Bair's pasture field; in the spring we gathered wild flowers in Mr. Gaut's woods; and we would swing in our orchard and wouldn't give up our turn until "the old cat died"; we had the last day picnic in the orchard several times. Do you girls recall that we had to play our ball games back of the school house because the boys claimed the main field as their own? When we were tired, we would sit in the shade of that nice maple tree and rest. An the games we played aren't played today. "Old Bum" we made up. The late Eula Sherbondy Tietze made the best old bum; she could scare us the worst. Rotten Egg is another outmoded game. How Julia Nagy and Maggie Durstine could give one salt or pepper just to see if we were good or bad eggs! In the winter we enjoyed playing "Where Did You Get That Hat?" "Here Goes Sambo Through The Window", and "Skip To My Lou." These all were forms of square dancing, but we didn't know it. We certainly liked to play on the wagons brought for repair to the shop run by Mr. Ruoff. One day the big girls dared Mar-

garet William Hepler to sit on the seat of a spring wagon. She took the dare; the big boys were watching and gave the wagon a push. It went down the bank and across the school-ground. Margaret was afraid to jump off, and she couldn't stop it. Luckily the shafts acted as a brake, and it ran into Layman's fence without injury to either the girl or the wagon. We all realized how dangerous it was to play heedlessly.

Once a year Dr. Crise came to check our sight and hearing. He was a tobacco chewer, and the teacher would place a coal bucket beside him. After checking each child, he would intone 20-20 teacher in sight and hearing s-s-s-s-pt, never missing the bucket. We were all 20-20 excepting Tom Sherbondy who had to wear glasses. No, I am not making fun of Dr. Crise. He was a confirmed tobacco chewer and had a fine disregard for the germ theory. I also have a warm feeling in my heart for him. Dr. Crise was a very obliging man. One busy Saturday afternoon he took time to bring me in his black bag to our house to live, or so Mother convincingly told me. Seriously Dr. Crise was a very learned man, and kept up to date in many ways.

He and the store-keeper were the only ones in Mendon with telephones, and he had one of the first Fords brought to this section of the country. It was crated and sent to Smithton by train. Doctor, the blacksmith, the wagonmaker, accompanied by some on-lookers went to Smithton to assemble and bring home the machine. Of course, Mr. Ford had sent full instructions, but it was quite a job to assemble the car—and a bigger job to follow directions for starting and driving it. All this was accomplished after much effort, tobacco juice spitting, and explosive speech.

Let us not forget the happy evenings spent at Mendon social events—pie socials, literary society, festivals, entertainments, and spelling bees. People came for miles to Mendon "affairs" in all types of vehicles—buggies, sleds, bicycles, and, later, cars.

Quite a few marriages came from these "doings". My own parents met at an entertainment. Father had driven his horse and buggy with a group of other drivers from Madison. My Cousin Ed. Fox from Hunker met his wife, Elsie Tarr, from Reagantown at a Mendon social.

I remember seeing her there that night. I didn't know who she was, but I thought she was the prettiest girl I had ever seen. She wore a brown taffeta dress with small blue bows all over the skirt. Evidently Cousin Ed thought as I. He told the boys that he was going to take that girl home; however, he waited until she went outside to ask her. He was afraid that he might get turned down and be laughed at. She told him that she couldn't go because she had ridden her bicycle. He very nonchalantly put the bike in the turtle back of the car; and the problem was solved. The Suter Boys from Ruffsdale would come in their Stutz Bearcat; three of them married wives from this section.

How we would work to make our room look nice! We oiled the black boards to make them shiny, blackened the stoves, and hung written work on the walls much in need of paint. I remember Bird Sherbondy blackening a warm stove when the directions said to use only on a cold stove. We small ones stood waiting for a terrific explosion, but nothing happened. Bird said, "I knew it would be all right. I did this at home." No crayons or art materials were provided, but that didn't stop us. We bought our own materials. I remember coloring double hearts to hang over a thin wire strung in a triangle from the front lamps to the back lamp. Our light came from oil lamps. When the wire was trimmed and our fingers numb, how we admired our handiwork! Then the big girls were afraid the young men would be so tall that they would bump their heads, especially Forrest Deussenberry. The big girls would be all thrilled about who might come, and this anticipation caused us younger ones to be interested, too.

Oh, those pie socials with Mr. Seaman Kelly doing the auctioning; and the young men who liked the same girl trying to outbid each other! The pie was put in a box, and the box was trimmed most beautifully. The boy who bought the box ate with the girl and generally took her home.

When I was fifteen, I was permitted to take a pie. I stood in a state of shock until it was bought by Cy Null, a man I had never seen. I ate with him; he asked to take me home, but I had been sternly warned to come home with my sisters as I was too young to walk home with a young man. I thanked him, and did as I was told.

After the pies were eaten, we played Ring. The young

people joined hands and circled the room singing, "John Brown's Body", "We Kept The Pig In The Parlor", "The Old Gray Goose", and other favorites of the day. When we came to a particular phrase, the boys went one way, and the girls went the opposite alternating and clasping hands as they passed. Finally the phrase was sung which meant to promenade with the boy whose hand you were clasping. You then clasped both hands and everyone walked in the same direction. We little girls would play Ring, too, and how thrilled we were if we got to promenade with a young man. One time Esther Sherbondy Goodwin walked with Leland Dusenberry and she felt so thrilled all the next week that we, who were near her age, were fairly green with envy. While the young people played Ring, the older folks visited with each other.

The literary society program consisted of "The Journal", which gave bits of local news, "Jokes", a "Debate" or "Extemporaneous Speaking", "Musical Selections", and "Recitations." Anyone, from smallest child to oldsters, participated. Just now I recall three of the speakers and their renditions:

Mr. John Williams, our venerable school board director, secretary, who looked as if he weren't given to foolishness, gave a reading the gist of it was about a beautiful black kitten with a white stripe down its back. He called, "Kitty! Kitty!" as it went under the barn with him after it. They buried him in the barnyard up to his neck for a week before he was acceptable to polite society.

Miss Mary Gressly gave a very dramatic recitation, especially emphasizing this line: "Father, curfew shall not ring to-night!"

George Painter recited "If I Darst, but I Darsent." I remember several men from Wyano formed an instrumental trio. The only one I knew was Mr. Davis, whose son, Howard, attended Mendon School for a few months. Alma Sherbondy Miller was a very good vocal soloist. After the program the young would play Ring. Sometimes the braver ones played "Where Did You Get That Hat" on the platform. This place of prominence attracted only the skilled.

An entertainment generally meant a "Play" with several acts, a curtain to be drawn, and a dressing room. Mendon was famous for its "Plays". There were also songs and recita-

tions by those who wished to participate.

The spelling bees brought the best spellers from the surrounding country. Two captains were chosen, and they alternately picked the good spellers. until both sides of the room were lined; then the teacher gave words from the spelling book. The honor lay in being the one who spelled down the school, for if you missed a word, you sat down. There were some very fine spellers in those days. One word that brought them down was "syzygy".

Festivals were held in the summer time on the school-ground. A booth or stand was placed against the side of the school building, and all kinds of "goddies" were sold. Sometimes tables were set up so the boys could sit and eat with their best girls. The chief entertainment here was Ring and Drop the Handkerchief.

When I was very small, for several summers the building was opened for a Blind Man who came to put on a show. The only thing I remember about that program was the Tall Man. I think he was on stilts. Of course his trousers covered those, and we children never knew if he were that tall or not. They tell me that the Blind Man played the banjo and sang. That I didn't remember.

The money derived from the pie socials was used for the building. The present bell, still atop the building, was bought when the late Basil Malone, husband of Mrs. Beula Pore Malone, taught at Mendon. Other years books were added to the library. Mrs. L. Belle Sherbondy McKee has been given the credit for starting a library in every school she taught.

Mendon School was used in the summer as a preparatory school for those getting ready to take the county test for teaching. Professor S. S. Gressly was the instructor about the year 1910. Perhaps he taught prior to this, but this is when our family moved to Mendon, and Grace remembers him walking home. His route was through our orchard and over Kildiggen. This was a very direct way and not nearly as formidable as it sounds as much of the land was then clear. The students came for miles around to attend school as Mendon is practically in the center of the township.

During the winter that Mr. William Gressly taught Mendon School, my cousins, William and Sara Marsh, from Madison

came over in their Ford to literary society. My late cousin Sara had a crush on the teacher. I think the feeling must have been mutual because he took her in his Father's vehicle to a pie social at Barren Run School. He didn't sit at the gate honking the horn as quite a few young men do today. He came to the door for her as a gentleman should. Blushingly, she went to the car; he helped her in, and they drove off. How do I know? What are lace window curtains for but to peek through, especially if the poor male victim is your school teacher. Next morning Cousin awoke and called gleefully, "Aunt Mary, Aunt Mary, come and see! I have the measles." She was happy because she would have to stay until she was well. One of her bed-room windows faced toward the school house and I strongly suspect that at recess and noon hour she was looking out that window when she should have been in bed with the blinds closed. The measles weren't entirely gone until she was visiting at the schoolground. And do you know that teacher didn't get the measles! Of course, we had nothing against Mr. Gressly, but a vacation is so appreciated by the best of children regardless of how it is acquired. The time came when Cousin hadn't one measle left, and she had to go home.

One evening my Cousin, Lib Campbell Smith, came with the Marsh cousins. Someone had brought a lip stick. Using lip stick was such a daring thing to do that the Cousins and Sister Eula went out on the side porch to apply it, so Aunt Mary wouldn't be shocked. I followed and stood with mouth drooping, watching them making Cupid's Bows on each others lips. Oh, my no, you never outlined the mouth. You made it look "kissable" — they just looked hopefully puckered to me.

During the winter the Cousins came to Mendon "doings", I heard so much about courting, dating, and sparking that I was very interested as to the proceedings. Whenever there was a "doings", I was allowed to go, but Dad took me home at nine o'clock. This was a terrible blow to my pride; I was ten and thought that I was a big girl. However, this one night I knew my sisters and Cousin were going to be walked home by boys. I was determined to find out what all this was about. I went to bed at the usual time, but I didn't go to sleep. I waited until I heard the sparkers in the parlor. I think Dad sensed something because every time I began inching out of bed, he would call, "Leahetta", from the next room. I, very sleepily, would answer, "Hunh?" Finally I made it out of bed, across the floor,

and down the stairway to the hall door into the parlor. It took an awful long time, but I was determined. When I got my eye to the key hole, all I could see was a bashful looking young man. However, I could hear the voices of the others. And everyone was on a separate chair! Now that room was large, and there were two comfortable sofas in it, but they were empty. And do you know what they were saying? A female voice would say, "We have been having nice weather." A male voice would reply, "Yes, we have." Silence! A female voice would say, "There was a nice crowd tonight." A male voice would answer, "Yes, there was a nice crowd." And so it went. I was disgusted! After all the "I think he's handsome," "Isn't he cute", "He's the cat's Meow", and "He really is the berries," I had been hearing while they had been dressing that evening I thought they might be using some of that kind of talk. Well, I just turned away, inched up the steps, crossed the floor, and wouldn't you know it, as I got into the bed, the springs went sque-e-k. Very sternly from the next room The Voice inquired, "Leahetta, are you sneaking out of bed?" And, very truthfully, I replied, "No Papa, I am not."

Mendon School wasn't the only school that had entertainments of different kinds. Barren Run, Pierce, Glenwood, Gate, Cross Roads, and Kelly schools had their good times, too. Naturally the young people in the Mendon area attended these. If there was no other mode of transportation, groups walked.

I remember of Barren Run having a social the winter that I was eleven years old. A group came from the Waltz's Mill area to Mendon; here the Mendon group joined them and followed the path over the Smith Hill (now Mitchell's) toward Barren Run. My sisters were in this group, and so was I and my last doll. Since the pathway went between Grandmother's house and barn, this was my chance to spend a week-end with her. One of the boys from Waltz's Mill, I think Herbert Theis, took the doll and sang and clowned the whole mile which made the walk seem short. Sometime in the night, I faintly heard the group singing and laughing on the way home. Young people seemed to have more energy then than now. The walking era was past by the time I was old enough to go. We went by car, and I know we didn't have half the fun the walkers had.

As the "Roaring 20's" came along, people went farther for their entertainment. There were cars for transportation,

and Mendon stores were no longer in operation. The Grange held its meetings in the wagon-maker's shop. That is where I attended my first square dance, as a spectator. I saw a couple, who were strangers to me, dance with so much grace and precision that I inquired who they were. They were Mr. and Mrs. John Pinkerton from Sewickley Township. Soon after this the Mendon Grange building was built, the Depression came, and people found entertainment closer at home. Different church and social groups held plays in the Mendon Hall. At least once a month a square dance, and bingo were held by the grange. I was permitted to attend these, and surely enjoyed square dancing. With all due respect to the young men I have danced with, none were as agile and adept at square dancing as Mr. Frank Hahn, the late Mr. Jacob Baird, and Mr. Frank Mencer. There was one set made up of the oldsters, and how they did enjoy dancing. It is a pleasure to remember the smiling faces of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Malone; I don't recall the other couples in the set. I told Mrs. Orton Sherbondy about them, and she said that Mrs. Malone had been Katie Hout. When Katie and her sister, Belle, were young, they were two of the best dancers in the country.

One Halloween the grange held a masked party. A boy came and sat on my lap. I guessed every one of my old school mates, but he would shake his head, "No". Finally I decided it must be a girl. When the music began, the couples all began to keep time to it by skipping over the floor. No matter how fast I went, I couldn't tire my partner. Finally, we unmasked and my partner was the late Mrs. Frank Waltz (Aunt Lily). Was I ever amazed, she had as much pep as I, and I was in my early twenties. The hall was very appropriately decorated for the season; pumpkins and shocks of corn fodder were placed in realistic positions. Before we had unmasked a farmer came in, went to a corn shock, threw it down, and began to husk corn. The ears of corn he had hidden in his pockets. Presently he began to kill mice; mice do hide in corn shocks in the fall of the year. He had the women practically hysterical for fear the mice would crawl on them. One could hear the mice, but no one saw any. When we unmasked, we discovered the corn husking, mouse killer was that big tease, Joe Clegg. Of course there were no mice at all; he had been making the sounds with his mouth. Oh how, he laughed at us women! We all had to laugh, too, because his act made the evening's entertainment complete.

The mode of transportation during the Depression was often by foot. One nice summer Saturday afternoon the late Nellie Clegg Cochran, Evelyn Husband Rozantz, and I decided to attend the square dance held every Saturday afternoon and evening at Moore's Grove, approximately seven miles away. I attended the same church as the Moore's and knew them well. Having no other means of transportation this particular day, we decided to walk. On the way, Mr. Paul Miller, another church member, gave us a ride of three miles. Finally, we arrived at our destination, and enjoyed ourselves greatly. Whole families came and spent the afternoon and evening—entertainment was scarce in those days. I expected my brother to be there in the family car, and we would ride home with him. I was wrong; he hadn't gone. It was coming toward evening, and home seemed very far away. However, my married sister, husband, and two little boys were there, but they had come in a roadster. We were in a predicament! After much discussion of the problem, we decided to ride home in the turtle back of their car. If you have never ridden in the turtle back of a car—don't. As we didn't want anyone seeing us getting in, we started to walk home. When we were out of sight of the picnickers, sister and family came along and stopped. We put newspaper on the floor, then crawled in feet first lying on our stomachs. In those days I wasn't thin, and Evelyn and Nellie were heavier. That turtle back was full. The situation struck us as ludicrous, and we began to giggle. We laughed the whole way home. We had to hold the lid up for air, but let it down whenever we passed a house. I was never so thankful to get home in my life, and I never walked anywhere again.

Finally the Depression Era passed, money became more plentiful, and we have become older. There are only three people living in Mendon today who were here when I was born. They are Mrs. Hattie Sherbondy Bryan, Mrs. Beatrice Nicewonger Pore, and Mrs. Caroline Momyer Sherbondy. I often think of my younger days, and wish that I could relive some of the good times. Since this is impossible, I have done the next best thing, I have relived them by writing of them so that I might recall them more readily. I hope you older people who read of these past events enjoy them as much as I have enjoyed the writing of them. And to any of you younger people who might be reading of these events, this is what we oldsters mean by the expression "The Good Old Days."



